

Good afternoon.

I am pleased to be here today to deliver my fourth State of the County address. This has been an eventful year to me personally and it makes today even more special.

First, let me thank the Chamber of Commerce for hosting this annual "Hot Topic Luncheon." We appreciate Harriet Whitaker, her staff and Board, for the exception work you do on behalf of businesses in the County.

I'm sure everyone enjoyed the wonderful meal and we want to thank Country Cupboard for preparing it and Covenant Community Church for allowing us to meet in their facility.

I appreciate my family, the mayors, city officials, magistrates, County employees and elected officials who are here today. Let me take this opportunity to publicly thank each of you for the service you provide, as well as the sacrifices you make to keep our County operating on a high level.

I would also like to recognize and pay tribute to Representative Eddie Ballard. Eddie, you have served the 10th District well during your 28 years in office. You have done an exceptional job on our behalf and you will be missed. Let us give him a round of applause.

This past Thursday was a sad day for Hopkins County, when we tragically lost two young men in a mining accident. As Governor Beshear said "Today has been a terrible day for Kentucky and for our coal-mining families." Will you please joining me in a moment of silence in memory of Michael Carter and Justin Travis, their families and friends and all those we hold near and dear in our hearts. Thank you.

But most importantly I offer my greetings and thanks to the people of Hopkins County. I appreciate you taking time to join us today.

Once again this year, I am proud to say with the utmost confidence that – considering the times and lack of a tax increase for the past two years – the state of Hopkins County Government is strong. This is a testament to the fiscal conservative and professional operation of our County. It is also testament to the type people who do the work of making the county safer, more beautiful, and a great place to live and work. We have many dedicated employees who diligently strive to make our County the great place it is. They are appreciated.

Let me share some words of wisdom credited to Teddy Roosevelt. He said" **DO WHAT YOU CAN, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, WHERE YOU ARE."**

We have weathered the first and hopefully the worst part of an economic storm, at the very center of which has been the most difficult economy we have faced in decades. It has resulted in many companies being forced to close or change their way of business and many households to make difficult choices due to the need to reduce spending.

However, as Hopkins Countians, we can boast that even in bad times, we are survivors, we are hard workers and innovators, and we are competitors while at the same time we are compassionate. We know how to work together always remembering the importance of helping our neighbor achieve what needs to be done. The nationwide collapse of the housing market and high unemployment rate is

directly attributed to an economic downturn. Each of us has been affected in some way. Locally we have seen the dramatic effect upon businesses and upon our citizens.

If you look closely, you can begin to observe small signs of improvement that have begun to surface. There are construction projects underway for businesses and for homes, and these are certainly welcomed as positive signs. We look forward to more.

Yes, we are indeed a people "Doing what we can, with what we have, where we are." I am certainly proud of the citizens of Hopkins County. Thank you!!!

Now I would briefly like to mention some Fiscal Court initiatives and actions during the past year:

- > FEMA funds were received for damage from Hurricane Ike and the Ice Storm;
- > A new ordinance was passed to strengthen enforcement of nuisances;
- > Debris has been removed from several creeks;
- > The Emergency Management Facility was renovated;
- > Rosenwald-Smith Multicultural center renovation is near completion;
- > North Hopkins Water District repairs are nearly complete;
- > New Judicial Center project is moving forward;
- > Regional Sports Complex is being developed: purchased additional land, contract with Rotary club, & walking trail completed;
- Activity is ongoing for the South Main Interceptor Sewer Project and an agreement with the City of Madisonville was signed to pay \$100,000 a year for 20 years, for benefit of county residents;
- Economic Development at Hanson Industrial Park continues: road into park designated Patrick Rudd Blvd.;
- > The Government Center is an Emergency Operations Center with the installation of a generator;
- > Four indigent burials were approved;
- > New Cities efforts have continued to improve communication and cooperative efforts throughout our County;
- > Agriculture/Convention Center was renamed for State Representative Eddie Ballard. This facility is an enhancement to our community and is being utilized for many meetings

and special events;

- > Sheriff's office-grant for Hopkins County Interoperative Voice Communication System Project;
- > Several sewer and water projects are underway.
- > Body armor for Sheriff's Office purchased.
- > Cemetery Preservation Grant was received.

Coal Severance Funding is designated for use solely in the areas of public health and safety, economic development, public infrastructure, information technology development, and public water and wastewater development.

Since our last meeting, funding for new Community coal severance projects approved are:

Hopkins County Sports Complex Site-development and improvements; public works equipment, public works development Building, City of Hanson Sewer System Improvements Phase II; Volunteer Fire Departments, City of Dawson Springs for planning and design of a new city building; South Main Sewer Interceptor Phase 1 a and 1 b; County road upgrade and repair; Madisonville Community College-coal employment opportunity and workforce development; Madisonville Community College-School Counts; School security and communications project for Dawson Springs; Pictometry Intelligent Images project ; Total station accident reconstruction equipment for Sheriff's Department; Nebo Fire Department Roof Repair; Darby House Museum and Welcome Center repair; Animal Control Facility planning and design; and three Portable generators on trailers for relocation in emergencies.

In addition, a \$250,000 multi-county coal severance project, which includes the counties of Webster, Muhlenberg, Ohio, and Hopkins, has been approved. These funds will be used to provide the training required before a coal miner can enter a mine. The coal severance grant will permit training facilities to be set up in each county, at different times and different locations. This will be more convenient for county citizens who will not be required to travel.

As in past years, I solicited input from each County department, asking them to highlight accomplishments made during the past year. I share them with you:

COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE- received a \$42,000 grant from the Department of Library& Archives and used the funds to scan over 300 mortgage books.

ROAD DEPARTMENT – purchased needed equipment to assist in road work. This included a pothole patcher and oil tank, three salt spreaders for snow removal, a dump truck equipped with a plow and salt spreader, as well as two John Deere tractors with side mowers, sweeper, and grader blade.

HOPKINS COUNTY JAIL –Throughout the year the jail assists many different groups in the community with special projects. Some of these projects accomplished are:

Built a new Farmers Market covering at the county fairgrounds;
Build a bridge for the walking trail at the new Hopkins County Sports Complex;
Installed Department of Homeland Security purchased GPS locators and computer mounding hardware in local ambulances and fire trucks.

The jail garden was started in 2006 and has allowed the jail to reduce food costs and provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the inmates, with surplus produce being donated to the Salvation Army and Senior Citizens Center.

Community service work hours in 2009 totaled 206,765 at a savings of nearly \$1.5 million dollars to cities, county, state, and local non-profit agencies in Hopkins County.

SANITATION DEPARTMENT – Although they are not working less, the Community Service workers picked up:

120 tons of litter in 2007, reduced to
75 tons of litter in 2008, and further reduced to
58 tons of litter in 2009.

This is an invaluable service and also a positive indication that our roadways are becoming cleaner. We can be proud of that.

A trial agreement with Scott Enterprises has been entered into to receive our E-scrap (computers, vcrs, small tvs, anything with a cord). There is no charge to the County, but it benefits us by keeping tonnage out of the landfill. Ultimately, at an average of 50 tons per month, it will save about \$22,000 in tipping fees.

HOPKINS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE – The office has collected over \$12 million in child support for Hopkins County families, and are ranked 10th in the state, earning the distinguished 2009 Outstanding Performance Award from the KY Cabinet for Families & Children.

HOPKINS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – The office began a Citizens Academy and it has been positively received in the community.

A new nationwide technology involving stolen property called LEADS ON-LINE is being utilized and resulted in the resolution of two local crimes within the first hour of operation.

A county-wide radio multi-year program to encompass all emergency responders has been launched and will be completed by 2013. The first stage grant for partnership with Murray State University is currently underway.

We commend each department for their accomplishments and encourage them to continue their efforts to better serve you and all our residents.

Certainly there are several efforts and projects in the planning stage:

I-69 impact, recommendations for replacing the Stagecoach Road Bridge, expansion of Highway 41-A, Madisonville Community College degree expansion, etc.

We are fortunate to have a healthy private sector and economic base with a diverse mix of jobs and employers. Our Economic Development efforts are active and continuous as we seek to pursue and attract new employers and industries to our area. This is an ongoing and difficult task, but the reward of ultimate success is beneficial to each of our communities.

We must continue to be a sound choice for industries who are seeking a new headquarters, for visionary entrepreneurs thinking about the best location to start a new business, and perhaps most importantly, the young family trying to decide upon a place to settle down and raise their children. Let us join in making Hopkins County that place. We are also proud of our non-profit sector. These agencies faithfully continue to provide essential service to our most vulnerable residents, giving assistance and hope where it is needed most.

I know we will continue to have an unsurpassed combination of excellent schools and educational institutions, first-rate healthcare, outstanding parks and recreational facilities, fine arts and cultural opportunities, and sound public services. Each of these is vital in making us both competitive in the marketplace and beneficial to families who have chosen to call Hopkins County "home".

We are grateful for our partnership with those of you in this room and in our communities. As we look forward to the rest of the year, I call upon each of you to join our task of ensuring that succeeding generations will enjoy the same opportunities, and be inspired by the same dreams we've experienced. We owe them nothing less and will continue our efforts with emphasis on fiscal management, education, city and community projects, industrial development, and public safety.

In many ways Hopkins County continues to control its own destiny.

The past is where we have been. While we can't change it, we can shape the future starting today. We know decisions made by your Hopkins County Government now will affect our region for years to come. Our collective task is to strive to bring growth and opportunity to all parts of our County.

In closing, I want to assure you that your Fiscal Court continues to seek information and work with other agencies and individuals for the betterment of Hopkins County. We are cognizant of the fact that the key to our success as a County is the strength of our community – the interconnected web of businesses, Nonprofits, educational institutions, health services, government, and citizens.

Let me end with a short story: A small boy was walking along a beach at low tide, where countless thousands of small sea creatures, having been washed up, were stranded and doomed to perish. A man watched as the boy picked up individual creatures and took them back into the water.

"I can see you're being very kind," said the watching man, "But there must be a million of them; it can't possibly make any difference."

Returning from the water's edge, the boy said, "Well, It will for that one."

If each of us continues to do all we can...with what we have...where we are, I have no doubt we'll get the job done and we will make a difference.

Thank you all for being here and for all you do for Hopkins County. God Bless.